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been reserved for competition among eligible 8(a) BD program participants, the Area Director will notify the SBA district office servicing the 8(a) concern whose size status has been protested. SBA will provide a copy of the protest to the protested concern together with SBA Form 355, Application for Small Business Size Determination, by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by any overnight delivery service that provides proof of receipt. SBA will ask the protested concern to complete the form and respond to the allegations in the protest.

(b) When SBA receives a request for a formal size determination in accord with § 121.1001(b), SBA will provide a blank copy of SBA Form 355 to the concern whose size is at issue.

(c) The protested concern or concern whose size is at issue must return the completed SBA Form 355 and all other requested information to SBA within 3 working days from the date of receipt of the blank form from SBA. SBA has discretion to grant an extension of time to file the form. The firm must attach to the completed SBA Form 355 its answers to the allegations contained in the protest, where applicable, together with any supporting material.

(d) If a concern whose size status is at issue fails to submit a completed SBA Form 355, responses to the allegations of the protest, or other requested information within the time allowed by SBA, or if it submits incomplete information, SBA may presume that disclosure of the information required by the form or other missing information would demonstrate that the concern is other than a small business. A concern whose size status is at issue must furnish information about its alleged affiliates to SBA, despite any third party claims of privacy or confidentiality, because SBA will not disclose information obtained in the course of a size determination except as permitted by Federal law.

[61 FR 3286, Jan. 31, 1996, as amended at 63 FR 31908, June 11, 1998; 69 FR 29207, May 21, 2004; 73 FR 56948, Oct. 1, 2008; 74 FR 45753, Sept. 4, 2009; 75 FR 62280, Oct. 7, 2010]

§ 121.1009 What are the procedures for making the size determination?

(a) *Time frame for making size determination.* (1) After receipt of a protest or a request for a formal size determination, the SBA Area Office will issue a formal size determination within 15 business days, if possible.

(2) The contracting officer may award a contract after receipt of a protest if the contracting officer determines in writing that an award must be made to protect the public interest. Notwithstanding such a determination, the provisions of paragraph (g) of this section apply to the procurement in question.

(3) If SBA does not issue its determination within 15 business days (or request an extension that is granted), the contracting officer may award the contract if he or she determines in writing that there is an immediate need to award the contract and that waiting until SBA makes its determination will be disadvantageous to the Government. Notwithstanding such a determination, the provisions of paragraph (g) of this section apply to the procurement in question.

(b) *Basis for determination.* The size determination will be based primarily on the information supplied by the protestor or the entity requesting the size determination and that provided by the concern whose size status is at issue. The determination, however, may also be based on grounds not raised in the protest or request for size determination. SBA may use other information and may make requests for additional information to the protestor, the concern whose size status is at issue and any alleged affiliates, or other parties.

(c) *Burden of persuasion.* The concern whose size is under consideration has the burden of establishing its small business size.

(d) *Weight of evidence.* SBA will give greater weight to specific, signed, factual evidence than to general, unsupported allegations or opinions. In the case of refusal or failure to furnish requested information within a required time period, SBA may assume that disclosure would be contrary to the interests of the party failing to make disclosure.

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(e) *Formal size determination.* The SBA will base its formal size determination upon the record, including reasonable inferences from the record, and will state in writing the basis for its findings and conclusions.

(f) *Notification of determination.* SBA will promptly notify the contracting officer, the protestor, and the protested offeror, as well as each affiliate or alleged affiliate, of the size determination. The notification will be by certified mail, return receipt requested, or by any overnight delivery service that provides proof of receipt.

(g) *Results of an SBA Size Determination.* (1) A contracting officer may award a contract to a protested concern after the SBA Area Office has determined either that the protested concern is an eligible small business or has dismissed all protests against it. If OHA subsequently overturns the Area Office's determination or dismissal, the contracting officer may apply the OHA decision to the procurement in question.

(2) A contracting officer shall not award a contract to a protested concern that the Area Office has determined is not an eligible small business for the procurement in question.

(i) If a contracting officer receives such a determination after contract award, and no OHA appeal has been filed, the contracting officer shall terminate the award.

(ii) If a timely OHA appeal is filed after contract award, the contracting officer must consider whether performance can be suspended until an appellate decision is rendered.

(iii) If OHA affirms the size determination finding the protested concern ineligible, the contracting officer shall either terminate the contract or not exercise the next option.

(3) The contracting officer must update the Federal Procurement Data System and other procurement reporting databases to reflect the final agency size decision (the formal size determination if no appeal is filed or the appellate decision).

(4) Once SBA has determined that a concern is other than small for purposes of a particular procurement, the concern cannot later become eligible

for the procurement by reducing its size.

(5) A concern determined to be other than small under a particular size standard is ineligible for any procurement or any assistance authorized by the Small Business Act or the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 which requires the same or a lower size standard, unless SBA recertifies the concern to be small pursuant to §121.1010 or OHA reverses the adverse size determination. After an adverse size determination, a concern cannot self-certify as small under the same or lower size standard unless it is first recertified as small by SBA. If a concern does so, it may be in violation of criminal laws, including section 16(d) of the Small Business Act, 15 U.S.C. 645(d). If the concern has already certified itself as small on a pending procurement or on an application for SBA assistance, the concern must immediately inform the officials responsible for the pending procurement or requested assistance of the adverse size determination.

(h) *Limited reopening of size determinations.* SBA may, in its sole discretion, reopen a formal size determination to correct an error or mistake, provided it is within the appeal period and no appeal has been filed with OHA. Once the agency has issued a final decision (either a formal size determination that is not timely appealed or an appellate decision), SBA cannot re-open the size determination.

[61 FR 3286, Jan. 31, 1996, as amended at 67 FR 47245, July 18, 2002; 69 FR 29207, May 21, 2004; 76 FR 5683, Feb. 2, 2011]

§ 121.1010 How does a concern become recertified as a small business?

(a) A concern may request SBA to recertify it as small at any time by filing an application for recertification with the Government Contracting Area Office responsible for the area in which the headquarters of the applicant is located, regardless of the location of parent companies or affiliates. No particular form is prescribed for the application; however, the request for recertification must be accompanied by a current completed SBA Form 355 and any other information sufficient to show a significant change in its ownership, management, or other factors